

in meaningful dialogue on how to confront our changing climate and other environmental concerns without hamstringing the agriculture industry.

This week, as we celebrate Earth Day and Arbor Day, let us appreciate the beauty of nature and renew our commitment to protect the environment for generations to come.

EXPRESSING SORROW OF THE HOUSE AT THE DEATH OF THE HONORABLE JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD, MEMBER OF CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

SPEECH OF

HON. CANDICE S. MILLER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 23, 2007

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I wish to join my colleagues in expressing my sorrow over the passing of JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD, the representative of California's 37th Congressional District. My thoughts and prayers go out to her constituents, her friends, and her family.

Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to get to know JUANITA during the 109th Congress when we both served as members of the Committee on House Administration. While some might view oversight of election law and the day-to-day functions of the House as relatively uninteresting, I know that I do not, and I know that JUANITA, who served as ranking member at the time, did not think them trivial either.

Whatever topic was before the committee, JUANITA was dedicated to assuring that things were done fairly, properly, and effectively. She was vigorous in guaranteeing the integrity of the Federal elections process and was committed to ensuring that every eligible voter had free and unfettered access to the voting booth. Likewise, in her oversight of managing the House, she wanted to ensure that everyone on Capitol Hill had a safe and secure place to work or visit, while preserving the grandeur of the Capitol and the surrounding buildings.

This tenacity was something she demonstrated throughout her life, not just during the decade she spent in Congress. After raising her five children, she continued her own education, earning a bachelor's degree at the age of 40. She followed that up with a master's degree in educational administration. She was no stranger to hard work, and she was not afraid to take on a challenge.

One of JUANITA's most notable accomplishments occurred earlier this year. In January, she became the first African-American woman to chair a committee in the House of Representatives. It was something that made many Members of the House very proud, and it was a tremendous accomplishment for a woman whose life was full of monumental achievements.

I think it speaks volumes of JUANITA's dedication that she was here voting in this House, representing her constituents, until less than a month before cancer took her life. In fact, almost none of her colleagues were aware of her illness and how serious it had become until the week before she passed away. And through it all, she held a warm spirit and a kind smile.

Madam Speaker, I join my colleagues in sorrow for JUANITA's passing, and I again express my condolences to JUANITA's family, friends, and constituents.

IN MEMORY OF ANDREW ALBERT ESPARZA, IRVING POLICE DEPARTMENT

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 24, 2007

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in memory of Officer Andrew Albert Esparza and in honor of his life dedicated to service and public safety.

Andrew passed away on April 13, 2007 in a fatal car accident while on his way to assist another officer. After graduating from the University of Texas in Arlington with degrees in business marketing and Spanish, Andrew followed in his brother's footsteps by joining the Irving Police Department in 2005. He was recently selected to join the SWAT team on a part-time basis and always made himself available as a Spanish translator. Though he was only with the Irving Police Department for 2 years, Andrew demonstrated great promise with expertise, maturity, and professionalism beyond his years of experience.

He is survived by his parents, Rafael and Christina of Fort Worth, TX; two brothers, Rafael Esparza, Jr. and wife, Jennifer of Irving, TX; Felix Esparza and wife, Haylee of Burleson, TX; sister, Zoe Esparza of Burleson, TX; grandparents, Lydia Garcia of Fort Worth, TX; Lazaro and Olivia Cantu of Fort Worth, TX; and nieces and nephews, Saeya, Sloan, Slade, and Rylee Esparza.

He will be remembered as a compassionate officer, a dedicated family man, and a devout Christian. May God bless all those he loved, and may I convey to them my sincerest condolences and the gratitude of the American people.

A TRIBUTE TO JOHN H. SIMS, JR.

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 24, 2007

Mr. MICHAUD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate John (Jack) Sims on the occasion of his retirement from the Department of Veterans Affairs, after more than 35 years of dedicated service. Jack will be greatly missed, and I join his many friends, co-workers and the veterans he served in wishing him the best of luck in the next phase of his life.

Jack's service to our country began in 1963, when he joined the United States Army. He began his VA career at the Martinez, California VA Medical Center in 1971 as an accountant trainee. Jack has held many positions in the VA across the country including Chief of Fiscal Service at VA Medical Centers in Washington, Illinois and California; Associate Center Director at VA Medical Centers in Oregon and New York; and Health System Administrator with Veterans Health Services and Research Administration in Albany, New York.

For the past 17 years, Jack has served as the Director of the Togus VA Medical Center. Under his leadership, the number of Maine veterans receiving care at Togus has increased from 13,000 to 33,000. Jack has also supervised the creation, relocation and renovations of six community-based outpatient clinics and two off-site mental health clinics to care for Maine's rural veteran population.

As Director, Jack and his dedicated staff of more than 1,000 VA employees have helped transform the Togus VA Medical Center into one of the best medical centers in the VA system.

Jack will be missed for his dedication and for his compassion by the veterans of Maine. I am pleased to join his colleagues, his family, and his friends in congratulating Jack on this milestone. I wish him a rewarding and enjoyable retirement.

NINETY-SECOND COMMEMORATION OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

SPEECH OF

HON. HOWARD L. BERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 23, 2007

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, today, April 24th, marks the 92nd anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian Genocide. I rise today to commemorate this terrible chapter in human history, and to help ensure that it will never be forgotten.

On April 24, 1915, the Turkish government began to arrest Armenian community and political leaders. Many were executed without ever being charged with crimes. Then the government deported most Armenians from Turkish Armenia, ordering that they resettle in what is now Syria. Many deportees never reached that destination.

From 1915 to 1918, more than a million Armenians died of starvation or disease on long marches, or were massacred outright by Turkish forces. From 1918 to 1923, Armenians continued to suffer at the hands of the Turkish military, which eventually removed all remaining Armenians from Turkey.

We mark this anniversary of the start of the Armenian Genocide because this tragedy for the Armenian people was a tragedy for all humanity. It is our duty to remember, to speak out and to teach future generations about the horrors of genocide and the oppression and terrible suffering endured by the Armenian people.

We hope the day will soon come when it is not just the survivors who honor the dead but also when those whose ancestors perpetrated the horrors acknowledge their terrible responsibility and commemorate as well the memory of genocide's victims.

Sadly, we cannot say humanity has progressed to the point where genocide has become unthinkable. We have only to recall the "killing fields" of Cambodia, mass killings in Rwanda, "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia and Kosovo, and the unspeakable horrors in Darfur, Sudan to see that the threat of genocide persists. We must renew our commitment never to remain indifferent in the face of such assaults on innocent human beings.

We also remember this day because it is a time for us to celebrate the contribution of the

Armenian community in America—including hundreds of thousands in California—to the richness of our character and culture. The strength they have displayed in overcoming tragedy to flourish in this country is an example for all of us. Their success is moving testimony to the truth that tyranny and evil cannot extinguish the vitality of the human spirit.

The United States has an ongoing opportunity to contribute to a true memorial to the past by strengthening Armenia's emerging democracy. We must do all we can through aid and trade to support Armenia's efforts to construct an open political and economic system.

Adolf Hitler, the architect of the Nazi Holocaust, once remarked "Who remembers the Armenians?" The answer is, we do. And we will continue to remember the victims of the 1915–23 genocide because, in the words of the philosopher George Santayana, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

A TRIBUTE TO DR. KEVIN BOND

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 24, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and honor to the work and achievements of Reverend Dr. Kevin Bond. Beginning at age 11, Dr. Bond began to gravitate toward the church. He studied the bible under Bishop Carl E. Williams, Sr. for whom he became an Associate Minister after orating his first sermon at the age of 18.

Dr. Bond enhanced his biblical knowledge by receiving a collegiate education. He earned High Honors at the Community Bible and Tabernacle Bible Institute and the New York School of the Bible. He also received a Masters of Divinity from the New York Theological Seminary and a Doctorate of Ministry from the United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH.

Dr. Bond is one of 12 delegates to join a significant work with the UJA Federation of New York and the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York for their Community Leaders' Mission in 2004.

Dr. Bond always felt a need to help others in his community. His unfettered desire to do so was demonstrated when he established his own pastorship of the Citadel of Praise and Worship Church. He founded the Citadel's first bible study class in order to help enlighten fellow members of his community by teaching them the stories of the bible. On January 5, 1997, the Citadel held its first Sunday morning worship service in Brooklyn, NY, with 35 people attendance at Dr. Bond's first-ever service.

His efforts to help others did not stop at the Citadel. Dr. Bond preached as he traveled across the country, with a focus on helping those in urban communities. To this day, Dr. Bond continues to assist those living in an urban setting with early child care learning programs, youth mentoring, and food and counseling programs for the homeless. Dr. Bond also educates young people in the secular realm, by serving as an educator with the New York State Board of Education to the academic and social development of the urban community.

Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize Dr. Kevin Bond's selfless education and community betterment efforts that have improved the lives of countless individuals.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Dr. Kevin Bond.

NINETY-SECOND COMMEMORATION OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY A. WAXMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, April 23, 2007

Mr. WAXMAN. Mr. Speaker, each year on April 24, Armenian communities around the world gather in somber commemoration of the genocide that began in 1915. Sadly, after 92 years, their grief is only compounded by those who aggressively deny or raise doubt about this troubling chapter of history.

This should be a day reserved for honoring the memory of those who were killed and paying tribute to the strength of those who survived. It should be a time to reflect on the personal narratives of those who were exiled, the historical evidence of villages and communities that were destroyed, and diplomatic cables from U.S. officials that described the atrocities. It should be an opportunity to resolve ourselves to fight crimes against humanity in all forms and all places. Instead, year after year, April 24 unleashes a battle of semantics.

Those who acknowledge what happened in Armenia as a "tragedy," a "catastrophe," or a "massacre" are correct. But nothing other than the term "genocide" can wholly characterize the systematic deportation of nearly 2 million Armenians and the deliberate annihilation of 1.5 million men, women and children. Anything short of that is unfair to those who perished and unhelpful to our plight against future acts of genocide.

SUPPORT SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF PUERTO RICO

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 24, 2007

Mr. HONDA. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1230, the Puerto Rico Self-Determination Act of 2007. I would also like to thank the Governor of Puerto Rico, Anibal Acevedo Vilá, for his leadership in developing the concepts and ideals embodied by this legislation. H.R. 1230 allows for the voice of the Puerto Rican people to be heard through a democratic and unbiased political process. This bill affords the people of Puerto Rico one of the most fundamental human rights, self-determination.

Affording the people the opportunity to decide their own future and government is fundamental to the history of the United States. As representatives of American Government, we are responsible to uphold the ideals and vir-

tues of democracy, freedom, and choice. As such, the people of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are entitled to a democratic process of self-determination defined by the well considered decision of the Puerto Rican people.

The process outlined by H.R. 1230 respects the right of the people of Puerto Rico to elect delegates to a constitutional convention that will draft and submit a proposal outlining the desired self-determination option. This proposal would then be approved by the people and then sent on for congressional approval. H.R. 1230 does not bias the decision of the people by imposing unsupported definitions and skewing the debate in the direction of any option; nor does it attempt to exclude others. This bill recognizes the right of the people of Puerto Rico to hold open and democratic debate on the topic of political status and affiliation with the United States. Congress should offer their input and response only after the Puerto Rican people have reached their own consensus on a self-determination proposal.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in this House not support any process that is imposed on Puerto Rico and its people by the Federal Government. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1230 and provide the Puerto Rican people the path to decide their future. The Commonwealth deserves, and is entitled to, true self-determination.

HONORING THE FIRST ANNUAL KEEP SEAGOVILLE BEAUTIFUL CITY CLEAN UP DAY

HON. JEB HENSARLING

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 24, 2007

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize the many students, civic organizations, Boy and Girl Scouts, service organizations, families and individuals who recently volunteered to "Keep Seagoville Beautiful." On April 14, 2007, the City of Seagoville and the Keep Seagoville Beautiful Commission sponsored the first annual Keep Seagoville Beautiful city-wide clean up. On that Saturday morning, over 150 dedicated citizens of Seagoville met at City Park to clean up their community. By the end of the day, those hard working volunteers had persevered through wind, rain, and cold to collect over 12 truckloads full of trash.

This annual event strives to "create an environment that continuously encourages the citizens to improve their quality of life and sense of pride in their community." It is the hard work of citizens like these, who take pride in their city, that will preserve our communities for future generations.

It is for these reasons that I have the distinct pleasure to honor the City of Seagoville, the Keep Seagoville Beautiful Commission, and the many dedicated volunteers who participated in this event. I am honored to represent them in the United States House of Representatives.